

# BOATING DEATHS ARE DOWN, BUT DANGER REMAINS ON OUR RIVERS AND LAKES [ Page B5 ]

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SECTION B » TUESDAY, MAY 28, 2013 KENTUCKY



## Big sister on a mission to help cure diabetes

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Bravo Company walks past applauding veterans during the Florence Memorial Day observance at the Boone County Veterans Memorial Monday. THE ENQUIRER/GLENN HARTONG

## BRAVO FOR BRAVO CO.

Florence hosts weekend of activities for military unit that the city adopted a decade ago

**T**he City of Florence Memorial Day parade and program included celebration and solemn remembrance, as residents from across Northern Kentucky recognized the nation's fallen service men and women.

The city adopted Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division 10 years ago. Residents have sent letters of support and supplies through the unit's numerous deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan.



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The city hosted a weekend of activities for the unit, which returned from its most recent deployment

in December.

The events included a parade Monday. Hundreds lined the route, which started at Boone County High School and followed Burlington Pike (Ky. 18) to the Florence Government Center on Ewing Boulevard.

The parade included local high school bands, scout troops, business owners and 100 members of the city's adopted military unit, known as "The Renegades."

Florence Mayor Diane Whalen, who has been the city's leader throughout its support of the unit,

said the relationship with the troops has grown stronger each year.

"These young men have been nothing but appreciative of all the love and support they are receiving from all of our community," Whalen said. "I hope this weekend touched everybody else's lives the way it touched ours."

Weekend activities included a Reds game – during which the unit was honored on the field – a golf outing, softball and basketball tournaments and a Renegade Boot

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## COVER STORY



**A WEEKEND OF HONORS:** See how Florence honored Bravo Company – its adopted military unit – in both photos and video. At Cincinnati.com.



Soldiers with the Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division are presented to the audience during the Florence Memorial Day observance at the Boone County Veterans Memorial late Monday morning. PHOTOS BY GLENN HARTONG/THE ENQUIRER

# Florence honors Bravo Company

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Camp, which featured members of the community.

Capt. Adam Dortona, commander of The Renegades, said the city has been a great partner both this weekend and throughout the unit's deployments.

"The Reds game was wonderful and probably a lifetime experience for some of these guys," Dortona said. "We love seeing the civilian support and meeting the people who have had our backs for all of these years. It was heartfelt, it was fun, the guys got to let their hair down, and it's something we'll never forget."

Amanda and Mike Paedae, both 31, of Dry Ridge, watched the parade and program with their four children, Elizabeth, 10, Trinity, 9, Christian, 3, and Hannah, 1.

Amanda Paedae, who home schools the children, viewed the events as a teaching opportunity.

"This is a really great opportunity for the kids to come out and see what Memorial Day is really all about and why we celebrate it," she said. "The kids are really enjoying it."

Capt. Jose Rondon, chaplain for 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, which includes the Renegades and five other units, said the city of Florence represents the American spirit.

"They are grateful, they are loving, and they want to express their gratitude to soldiers all over the United States by adopting this unit," Ron-



Robin Wells, 7, of Burlington, watches the Florence Memorial Day parade move south along Ewing Boulevard late Monday morning.

don said. "There are lots of heroes, more than 13, that go beyond the boundaries of what we represent. We just ask that the people keep loving and supporting us, because we will keep protecting you."

The Renegades have suffered numerous casualties, including 13 soldiers killed in action, since the city adopted the unit.

The city recognized each of the fallen soldiers by name and with a plaque during the program that followed the parade.

The program, which took place at the Boone County Veterans Memorial,



Cub Scout Zachary Eckler, with Pack 32, salutes during the Florence Memorial Day observance at the Boone County Veterans Memorial.

included recognition of veterans of each branch of the military and the laying of wreaths by members of the Northern Kentucky Blue Star Mothers.

U.S. Army Lt. Col. Scott Fowler, who was raised in Florence, emceed the ceremony.

"What a great day to be a soldier," Fowler said. "I have always loved this city, but the way the people have come together from this community is amazing. Behind every one of these soldiers is about 50 people who care, and it all starts here."

The program concluded with a 21-gun salute and the sounding of Taps by the Florence Band trumpeters.

Dortona said the tribute was a fitting ending to the ceremony.

"It's always important to take time to honor the fallen that have come before us, not just on Memorial Day but every day," Dortona said. "These guys are true patriots, and we hope that we can continue to carry the torch and bring honor to their name and we know the people of Florence will continue to do that as well." ■